



National Fire Plan

Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment

Southeastern Massachusetts Fuels Program

■ The Challenge

Southeastern Massachusetts is one of the most wildfire-prone sections of the US. Unmanaged, highly flammable fuels are accumulating steadily in the pitch pine and scrub oak forests that are common to the region.

This area is also the most rapidly urbanizing section of Massachusetts—people enjoy the amenities that the region's forests provide.

■ The Solution

- Reduce hazardous fuels by using mechanical treatments and prescribed fire.
- Create public awareness about the complexity of managing forest fuels.
- Treat 200 acres of forest fuels to reduce flammability and increase defensible space.
- Create/rehabilitate 102 miles of perimeter firebreaks and interior safety zones of varying width.

■ Resulting Benefits

The project is helping people in the Wildland Urban Interface—where forests and human settlements meet—understand ecosystem-based fire hazard mitigation issues and how to reduce the risk of wildfires. The project is helping to:

- Reduce the number and size of wildfires.
- Reduce property losses.
- Increase the use of prescribed fire as an effective tool for lowering fire risk.
- Develop the public's appreciation for the science of fuels management.
- Create adequate firebreaks and safety zones to protect surrounding communities and suppression forces.
- Achieve the desired future condition.



Prescribed fire at Miles Standish State Forest

■ Sharing Success

Much of the project is directly applicable to areas on the east coast that have similar conditions, such as Long Island and the New Jersey Pine Barrens. Activities offer useful ways to address each of the 9 operating principles in the National Fire Plan:

- *Firefighting readiness*
- *Prevention through Education*
- *Rehabilitation*
- *Hazardous fuel reduction*
- *Restoration*
- *Collaborative stewardship*
- *Monitoring*
- *Jobs*
- *Applied Research and Technology Transfer*

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